

**List of Error-Prone “Dangerous” Abbreviations, Symbols, and Dose Designations**  
*Abbreviations listed here must not be used (do-not-use list) at KACH – 2 February 2006*

Abbreviations	Intended Meaning	Misinterpretation	Correction
µg	Microgram	Mistaken as “mg”	Use “mcg”
IN	Intranasal	Mistaken as “IM” or “IV”	Use “intranasal” or “NAS”
IU* *	International unit	Mistaken as IV (intravenous) or 10 (ten)	Use “units”
q.d. or QD* *	Every day	Mistaken as q.i.d., especially if the period after the “q” or the tail of the “q” is misunderstood as an “i”	Use “daily”
q.o.d. or QOD* *	Every other day	Mistaken as “q.d.” (daily) or “q.i.d. (four times daily) if the “o” is poorly written	Use “every other day”
q1d	For one day or daily	Mistaken as q.i.d. (four times daily)	Use “daily” or “for one day”
ss	Sliding scale (insulin) or ½ (apothecary)	Mistaken as “55”	Spell out “sliding scale;” use “one-half” or “1/2”
TIW or tiw	3 times a week	Mistaken as “3 times a day” or “twice in a week”	Use “3 times weekly”
U or u* *	Unit	Mistaken as the number 0 or 4, causing a 10-fold overdose or greater (e.g., 4U seen as “40” or 4u seen as “44”; mistaken as “cc” so dose given in volume instead of units (e.g., 4u seen as 4cc)	Use “unit”
Dose Designations and Other Information	Intended Meaning	Misinterpretation	Correction
Trailing zero after decimal point (e.g., 1.0 mg)* *	1 mg	Mistaken as 10 mg if the decimal point is not seen	Do not use trailing zeros for doses expressed in whole numbers
No leading zero before a decimal dose (e.g., .5mg)**	0.5 mg	Mistaken as 5 mg if the decimal point is not seen	Use zero before a decimal point when the dose is less than a whole unit
Drug Name Abbreviations	Intended Meaning	Misinterpretation	Correction
MgSO <sub>4</sub> **	magnesium sulfate	Mistaken as morphine sulfate	Use complete drug name
MS, MSO <sub>4</sub> **	morphine sulfate	Mistaken as magnesium sulfate	Use complete drug name
Symbols	Intended Meaning	Misinterpretation	Correction
x3d, etc	For three days	Mistaken as “3 doses”	Use “for three days”
°	Hour	Mistaken as a zero (e.g., q2° seen as q20)	Use “hr,” “h,” or “hour”

\* \* These abbreviations are included on the JCAHO’s “minimum list” of dangerous abbreviations, acronyms and symbols that must be included on an organization’s “Do Not Use” list, effective January 1, 2004.

Referenced from Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) 2005 © [www.ismp.org](http://www.ismp.org)  
for internal use at Keller Army Community Hospital.